# FFA Leadership Development Program

2019 Soil Stewardship Public Speaking Contest Theme:


To prepare for the public speaking contest, students are to consult with their Ag Science teacher and use this Guidelines Packet which is accessible on the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board's website. The student is also to work with their soil and water conservation district (SWCD) as a local resource. A statement signed by an SWCD representative must be attached to the submitted speech.

To **locate and contact** a soil and water conservation district, **refer to page 8** of this packet and follow the instructions.

This program is a partnership between the Texas FFA, the Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas, the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, and the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

For more information contact:

**Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board**
**1497 Country View Lane**
**Temple, TX 76504-8806**
**(254) 773-2250 or 800-792-3485**
**https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/**

# Scholarships Available

Three scholarships will be awarded by the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts. *One $3,000.00 scholarship* will be awarded to the first place contestant, *one $2,000.00 scholarship* will be awarded to the second place contestant and *one $1,000.00 scholarship* will be awarded to the third place contestant.

Scholarship money must be used to defray costs of a recipient's education at a technical institution, college, or university of the recipient's choice. Scholarship funds will be transmitted directly to a public speaking contest winner's chosen technical school, college, or university in the student's name upon proof of registration as a full-time student at the institution of higher learning.

**Expense Paid Trips:** The state first place scholarship winner and his or her advisor will receive an expense paid trip under State of Texas travel guidelines to the annual meeting of Texas Soil and Water Conservation District Directors. The first place Soil Stewardship Public Speaking Contest Winner is required to present his or her state winning speech at the annual meeting of SWCD Directors.

# To Access the Guidelines Packet

1. Click on the Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board's website: https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/
2. Along the top of the webpage, hover over programs and then hover over "Public Information and Education" and click on the first link in the pop up "Soil and Water Stewardship Public Speaking Contest" or visit https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/programs/public-information-and-education/soil-and-water-stewardship-public-speaking-contest.
3. Once on the page, to the right is a box titled documents where you will find the 2019 Guidelines Packet.

# To Get the Student Started

Using the prompt statements or questions noted in the speech outline on page six, the student is to center his/her speech on the theme **"***Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper***".** The focus of the speech is to demonstrate knowledge gained about soil as a result of research and personal consultation with the local soil and water conservation district. It is further recommended that the student consult the listed resources that follow to gain a well-rounded view of the theme topic. **Other resources may also be consulted in addition to the listed references.**

## Recommended Resources for Speech Development

https://www.agriculture.com/crops/conservation/grow-life-in-the-soil The need is critical to grow more life in the soil, and it starts by treating it as you would your own body.

https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/12/171207095023.htm Researchers have invented new systems to study the life of microorganisms in the ground. Without any digging, the researchers are able use microchips to see and analyze an invisible world that is filled with more species than any other ecosystem.

http://lifeunderyourfeet.org/en/soileco/intro/biodiversity.asp An important measure of the health of an ecosystem such as soil is the variety of species that live in that ecosystem. The variety of species living in any natural environment is known as that environment's biodiversity. Soil environments have some of the greatest biodiversities on Earth.

https://www.factmonster.com/dk/encyclopedia/earth/soil General questions are raised and answered on how soil is formed, how and why there are different types of soils, and how living things help the soil.

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/soils/health/biology/?cid=nrcs142p2_053860 The multitude of creatures living in the soil are critical to soil health. They affect soil structure and therefore soil erosion and water availability. They can protect crops from pests and diseases. They are central to decomposition and nutrient cycling and therefore affect plant

growth and amounts of pollutants in the environment. Finally, the soil is home to a large proportion of the world's genetic diversity. The Soil Biology Primer Chapters on the web page provides more information on the:

▪Soil Food Web ▪Food Web & Soil Health ▪Soil Bacteria ▪Soil Fungi ▪Soil Protozoa ▪Soil Nematodes ▪Soil Arthropods ▪Earthworms

https://www.soils4teachers.org/land-and-people Take anything in one's life and one can trace it back to soil. We could not survive without soils! While often not aware of it, soils really do directly or indirectly affect every part of our lives.

https://www.soils4teachers.org/quotes This source literally gives hundreds of quotes said by many famous people and figures throughout history regarding the importance of soils. The source provides philosophical food for thought for the speech writer.

https://www.maswcd.org/Youth_Education/StudyGuides/Soils_study_guide.htm "Each soil has had its own history. Like a river, a mountain, a forest, or any natural thing, its present condition is due to the influences of many things and events of the past." --- Charles Kellogg, *The Soils That Support Us*, 1956

http://organiclifestyles.tamu.edu/soil/microbeindex.html As a soil microbiologist at Texas A&M University working with beneficial soil microbes and teaching soil microbiology to a very diverse audience of students Dr. David Zuberer discusses the nature of soil microbes and their normal functions in soils, both cropped and uncropped, including turfgrass soils. In this brief article Dr. Zuberer presents what is currently known about the functions of microbes in soils and what factors govern their activities.

https://blog.treepeople.org/environment/2015/05/5-reasons-cant-live-soil Article gives five reasons life cannot be sustained without soil.

http://lifeunderyourfeet.org/en/soileco/intro/biogeochemistry.asp In a food web for above-ground species, the source of energy is the sun. To soil ecologists, understanding the interactions between species below ground is just as important as understanding the species themselves because the food web for soil species is different.

https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/index.php/about The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) administers Texas' soil and water conservation law and coordinates conservation and nonpoint source water pollution abatement programs throughout the State. It is the mission of the TSSWCB, working in conjunction with local SWCDs, to encourage the wise and productive use of natural resources. The goal of the agency is to ensure the availability of those resources for future generations so that all Texans' present and future needs can be met in a manner that promotes a clean, healthy environment and strong economic growth.

https://www.soils.org/files/sssa/iys/october-soils-overview.pdf Article touches on some examples of commercial products whose origin is soil.

# Objective of the Speech

The primary objective of the speech is for the speaker to demonstrate knowledge on the importance of a healthy soil ecosystem and why soil environments have some of the greatest biodiversities on earth.

**Specific Instructions:** The speech must be between ***six and eight minutes in length.*** For specific rules and requirements relating to the contest, consult the Degree Check Guidelines.

# Speech Outline

## Introduction

☑ Introduce the theme **"***Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper***".** Consider incorporating a reflective thought based upon what was learned during research for the preparation of the speech.

☑ Set the tone of the speech with some thought provoking quote regarding a philosophical view for the conservation of soil resources.

## Body of Speech

☑ From an interview and discussion with a local soil and water conservation district employee, a conservation district director or USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service district conservationist or NRCS technician, discuss ways in which the local soil and water conservation district, along with agricultural producers cooperating with the SWCD, contribute to sustaining healthy soils through conservation planning and practices.

☑ Present a perspective on current and future soil conservation issues in contrast to increasing population demographics. How will these issues impact your community, the state, the nation?

☑ Discuss how good land stewardship contributes to the environmental and economic health to the local community, state, and nation. Give examples of public benefits derived from a healthy viable agricultural sector.

## Conclusion

☑ In reflecting on what you have learned do you believe that your generation has a key role in responsible future decisions and actions that impact the future of the state and nation's soil and water resources?

** It is not required that the above prompt questions be addressed in the speech as chronologically listed. The student has the flexibility to rearrange the prompt questions in a manner that permits a smooth flow of delivery. The student also has the flexibility to introduce other concepts into his or her speech that he or she feels relevant to the theme of the speech.*

# Soil and Water Conservation District Consultation Affidavit

My legal name is _____ and I am currently a member of the _____ FFA Chapter affiliated with _____ High School in _____ Texas. I hereby state that that the information stated is both accurate and complete and that I have consulted with the _____ Soil and Water Conservation District in preparation for the 2019 Soil and Water Stewardship Public Speaking Contest ("*Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper*").

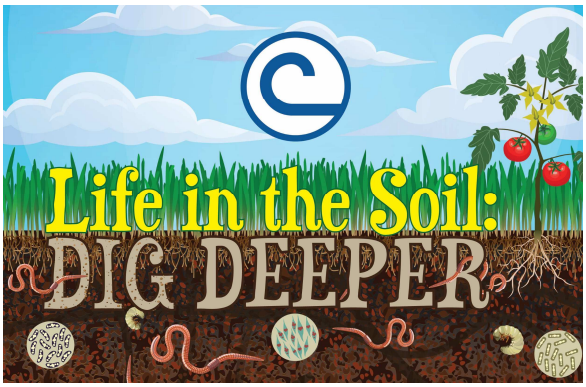
_____ _____

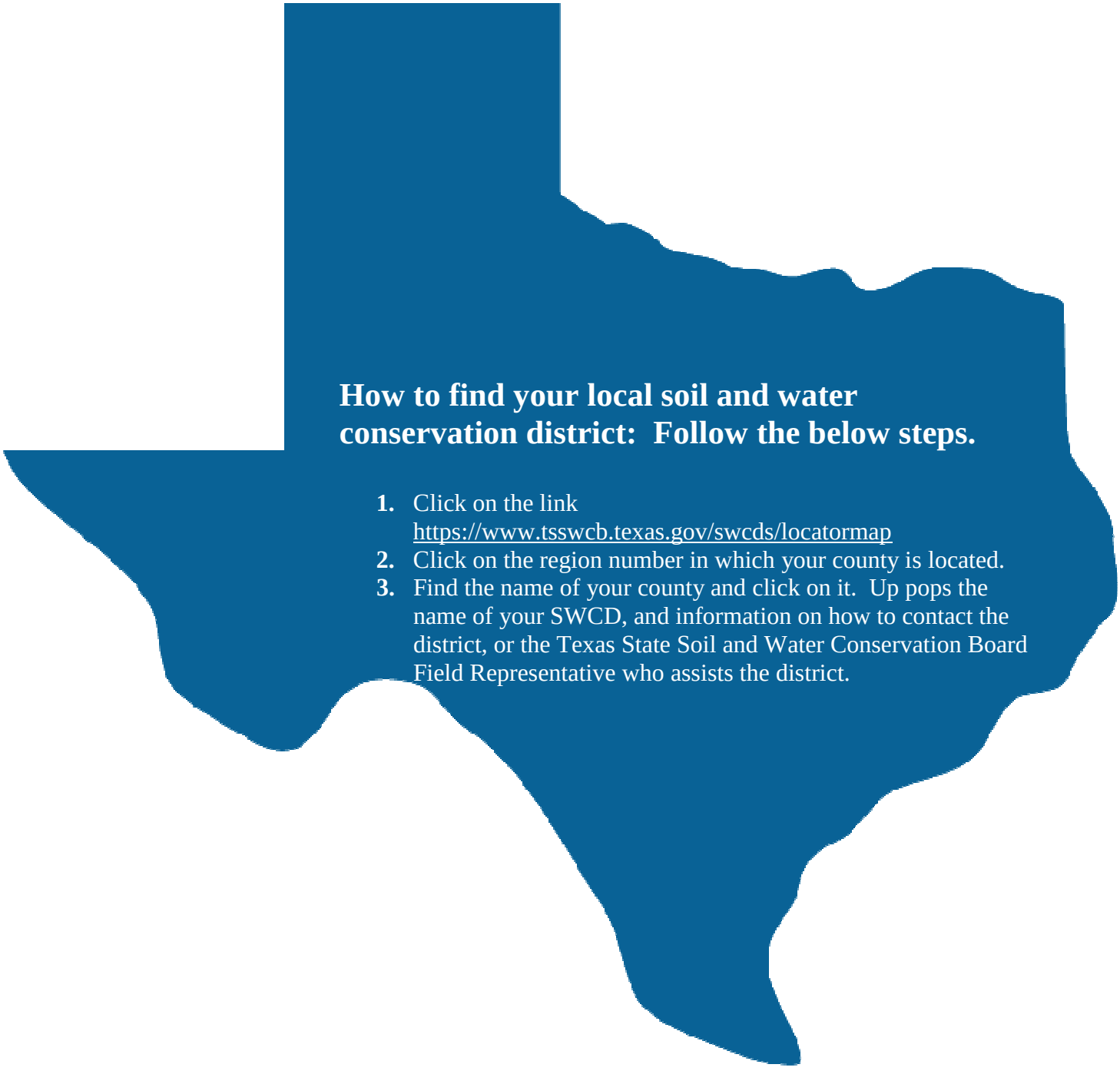
(Student Signature) (Date)

_____ _____

(SWCD Representative Signature) (Date)

(*This form should be submitted along with the speech.*)





## How to find your local soil and water conservation district: Follow the below steps.

1. Click on the link https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/swcds/locatormap
2. Click on the region number in which your county is located.
3. Find the name of your county and click on it. Up pops the name of your SWCD, and information on how to contact the district, or the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board Field Representative who assists the district.